


Riversdale Beach Community Plan 2024-2034



Riversdale Beach
Community Plan

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Supported by Masterton District Council

Riversdale Beach Community Planning

The purpose of this Riversdale Beach Community Plan 2024 -2034 is to provide a basis for action to achieve the community’s aspirations.

The plan represents the voice of the Riversdale Beach community: a living document that will help guide future decisions and prioritise projects the Riversdale Beach community wish to address over a ten-year timeframe. It’s about what the community can do itself and advocate for, and what the community would like to see Council do in partnership with the community and other organisations.

The plan was developed by an evolving local community team with support from the Masterton District Council, with the wider community given the opportunity to have their say on the future of Riversdale Beach.

The team engaged the Riversdale Beach community and those who have a connection with the area, through a series of workshops, one on one interviews, a community survey and specific targeted engagement including local hapū, Council elected members, Whareama School and the Riversdale Beach Surf Life Saving Club.

The plan sets out a number of projects and initiatives that have yet to be costed or funded. This work would be required prior to implementation.

Introducing Our Key Priority Areas

Through the community engagement, the community shared with us a range of positive and constructive comments that clearly articulated what they valued in their community and what was important to be retained. Equally their aspirations and ideas for the future told us about what could be improved and what they would love to see.

Five key priority areas arose from the answers and feedback the Riversdale Beach community provided, including;

Key Priority Area 1.	Protecting and understanding our natural coastal environment
Key Priority Area 2.	Safeguarding our rural beach character and unique sense of place
Key Priority Area 3.	Fostering our community spirit and vibe
Key Priority Area 4.	Enhancing our community organisations, facilities and assets
Key Priority Area 5.	Ensuring our infrastructure meets community needs

Further information about each Key Priority Area is described below.

Riversdale Beach Community Plan Strategic Framework

By using the common themes across each of the five key priority areas a Riversdale Beach Community Plan vision statement emerged.

Riversdale Beach - A community that cares for its coastal environment, rural beach character, and one another.

The table below outlines the strategic framework of the Riversdale Beach Community Plan. Each Key Priority Area has an aspiration attached to it along with some foundation and enabling actions. The aspirations describe the outcomes the Riversdale Beach community want to focus on over the next 10 years. The Riversdale Beach Community Plan Implementation Guide below provides a guideline for the plan's implementation.



This table sets out the vision, priority areas, and actions in the plan. The plan sets out a number of projects and initiatives that have yet to be costed or funded. This work would be required prior to implementation.

Riversdale Beach Community Plan

Vision statement – Riversdale Beach – A community that cares for its

Key Priority Areas

1. Protecting and understanding our natural coastal environment

To provide a healthy and resilient environment (beach, sand dunes, parks and reserves) that supports and enhances our village’s biodiversity and natural heritage, and to actively plan for climate change.

2. Safeguarding our rural beach character and sense of place

To encourage a slower relaxed pace of life that protects our rural beach character and celebrates our village’s heritage.

Foundation Actions- underpin much of the way the plan will be implemented

The Riversdale Beach Community Association will take the lead role in implementing foundation actions:

- a)** RBCA governance review regarding how the community plan will be implemented,
- b)** Develop a Community Communications Plan regarding the Riversdale Beach
- c)** Resourcing and Funding - Investigate funding for a part-time Community Plan
- d)** Develop an external funding and grants plan that identifies potential funding
- e)** Continue to maintain effective working relationship with MDC, including appointing

Enabling Actions

1. Natural Environment

1.1 Providing better information and communication about how to care for our beach and sand dunes, and be a low impact resident and visitor

1.2 Controlling and monitoring pest animals

1.3 Managing the impacts of human activities and coastal erosion on our sand dunes

1.4 Controlling pest plants, education and monitoring

1.5 Monitoring and influencing responsible dog control to protect nesting birds and other wildlife

1.6 Influence water quality improvements to all Riversdale’s streams

1.7 Encourage active local community action towards climate change

2. Rural Beach Character

2.1 Providing better information and communication about subdivisions, shared streets, active transport choices, litter prevention and local history

2.2 Encouraging a slower pace of life culture

2.3 Encouraging low impact development and sensitive design

2.4 Celebrating our heritage



coastal environment, rural beach character and one another.



3. Fostering our community spirit and vibe	4. Enhancing our community organisations, facilities and assets	5. Ensuring our infrastructure meets community needs
To strengthen and maintain active partnerships with bach owners, visitors, mana whenua, local authorities, community stakeholders and volunteers (RBCA, local clubs etc), to provide a vibrant, safe, inclusive village community.	To continue to provide quality community organisations, facilities and assets that offer choice, are accessible, meet community needs and connect people to the coast.	To provide reliable infrastructure assets and services that meet community needs and that are adaptable to our changing climate



the plan with regular communication with Masterton District Council and the local community, focusing on the following

for example setting up a RBCP Steering Group under RBCA Community Plan coordinator opportunities for specific projects/actions a place-based relationship manager and one point of contact.



3. Community Spirit and Vibe	4. Community organisations, facilities and assets	5. Infrastructure
3.1 Providing better information and communication about local regulatory rules, considering others and keeping safe	4.1 Coordinating greater collaboration between our community organisations and local businesses to provide a quality range of visitor and recreational experiences	5.1 Better information and communication required about subdivisions, MDC service request process, shared streets and active transport choices
3.2 Ensuring community safety	4.2 Celebrating our volunteers and encouraging the leaders for tomorrow	5.2 Ensure a safe and reliable Riversdale Beach access road and shared local streets that protect our rural beach character
3.3 Prioritising and supporting community events	4.3 Providing more recreational trails	5.3 Ensure reliable wastewater and stormwater assets and positive outcomes for water quality and quantity
3.4 Emergency preparedness	4.4 Upgrading beach access areas (Bodle Drive and Southern Reserve)	5.4 Reduce and control our rubbish
3.5 Providing access to health services	4.5 Providing visitor facilities and services e.g. more seats, fitness trail, EV charge station etc.	

Key Priority Areas

Each key priority area is briefly outlined below.

Key Priority Area 1. Protecting and understanding our natural coastal environment

Protecting the environment and natural areas at Riversdale Beach was a common recurring theme throughout the community engagement.

Riversdale Beach has just over 60 hectares of coastal reserves. These areas are included in the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) key native ecosystem (KNE) programme. The KNE programme aims to protect and manage Wellington region's best examples of pre-human ecosystem types.

Riversdale's coastal reserves are important sites for a wide range of coastal and wetland bird species and the only known breeding site for the NZ Dotterel in the Wellington region.

Community feedback demonstrated the importance and value of the beach, dunes, Southern Reserve, Motuwaireka Stream, and estuary.

The community sees key threats to these natural areas being: climate change and coastal erosion, human activities such as inappropriate vehicle use, track creation, uncontrolled dogs, rubbish and fire, and lastly animal and plant pests.

Many people would like to see more environmental protection and enhancement of these areas, including: greater awareness and education, more native planting, dune protection, pest control, improved water quality of all of Riversdale's streams and better protection of the NZ dotterel breeding sites.

A critical first step and clear priority is to provide the community and visitors with up-to-date, reliable information and advice about our coast and changing climate. Keeping people regularly informed about our natural environment not only educates but encourages interest and involvement in specific projects.

Communication and education need to carefully identify target audiences, coordinate key messages, and use a variety of relevant delivery methods, for example: social media, on-site signage, one-pagers, workshops, guest speakers, etc.

We are already experiencing negative climate change impacts locally through more severe droughts, abnormally high rainfall events causing flooding and landslips, and increased coastal erosion.

Climate change impacts will only get worse with continued inaction, so it is in all our best interests for our community to act now to help slow the rate of change. We also know some significant impacts are already locked in and as a community we need to be ready to adapt to these changes.

Key Priority Area 2. Safeguarding our rural beach character and unique sense of place

Key elements and features that contribute to character and sense of place include: overall village layout and visual appearance, ratio and distribution of parks and open space, design of streetscape and public assets, vegetation patterns, mature tree framework, maintenance and cultural heritage.

Throughout the community engagement many people indicated that they wanted to protect and enhance Riversdale's rural beach character, its relaxed, laidback atmosphere and quintessential old-fashioned kiwi style baches.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of rubbish control and declining parks and reserve maintenance, degrading the visual appearance of the village.

There are mixed views on the pros and cons of residential growth, along with varied perceptions of the number of planned and approved subdivisions. Some people think that residential growth and more people are changing village character, while others support residential growth as it can offer additional patronage to existing clubs, organisations

and businesses. A clear priority is providing the community with up-to-date and reliable information about what subdivisions have been approved and the expected number of new dwellings.

Riversdale Beach has been identified as a coastal Settlement Zone in the Proposed Wairarapa Combined District Plan, currently under review, with the rules remaining the same or similar to the rules currently under the Operative District Plan (2011).

Under the Proposed Plan, the Settlement Zone rules pertaining to Masterton region. The rules are:

- 400m² minimum lot size, one dwelling per site, 3m setback from front boundary (for a dwelling), and 5m setback from the front boundary for an accessory building, and a maximum height of 10m.

Please note, these rules are still 'draft'. The Proposed District Plan has gone through a public consultation process in late 2023, where the public could make a submission(s) on the proposed rules up until 19 December 2023.

Under the current Operative District Plan (2011), two residential subdivisions have been approved through a notified hearing process and the decision made by an independent hearing commissioner. These were for a 13-lot subdivision at Pinedale Crescent and 15 lots along Rochdale Road. This is in addition to the (consented 2005) Riversdale Terrace Subdivision which includes approximately 54 lots on the northern terrace. The latter proposed and consented subdivision is currently on the market along with adjoining farmland. At this stage, it is unknown whether the new owners will wish to proceed with the 54-lot subdivision which is consented, but no work has yet commenced to develop this area.

As mentioned above, Riversdale Beach has extensive areas of parks and open space throughout the village, including the notable sand dunes and public foreshore reserve.

Over the last decade or so, Riversdale Beach has kept urban-like infrastructure such as footpaths, kerb and channel, and streetlights to a minimum to reflect the rural beach character and dark sky, along with keeping the wide grass berms, particularly down the southern end and up within the Riversdale Terraces. Community feedback is that this is still the community's preference and they do not wish to see extensive increases in footpath, and kerb and channel, to keep the relaxed rural feel.

Many people expressed the need for a safer pedestrian network and better visitor car parking provision, particularly during the peak summer holiday period but still wanting to retain the rural beach character. Approximately 80% of the year the village is a quiet peaceful coastal settlement, with the remaining 20% experiencing significant summer population influx. Investigating alternative street management options during busy visitor periods to provide safer streets for people has been suggested, including promoting our streets as shared corridors, encouraging active forms of transport such as walking and cycling, promoting a slower relaxed pace of life, and upgrading multiple beach access ways. If any hard infrastructural solutions are required, the community would prefer low low-impact and sensitive design that is in keeping with the rural beach character.

Riversdale Beach has a rich and interesting Māori and European heritage. Celebrating this local history could assist Riversdale Beach in retaining its identity and create a unique sense of place. Capturing and recording local knowledge, and stories and history about the area, is required, along with making this information visible. For example, interpretation signs in parks, supporting St Joseph's Church, articles in community newsletter, new road names, etc.

Appendix A provides a brief outline of Riversdale Beach histories.

Key Priority Area 3. Fostering our community spirit and vibe

Riversdale Beach is a village with a strong sense of community which is valued by many residents and visitors. Many people want to protect and foster this great community spirit and vibe, and value the supportive safe family friendly environment of Riversdale Beach.

During the engagement, people expressed a desire for more community events, festivals and concerts, particularly for youth over the busy summer holiday period. The Riversdale Beach Community Association does a brilliant job organising, coordinating and delivering a community events calendar based on the availability of volunteer resources and capacity. Prioritising events and recruiting more volunteer support to help run these events is needed.

For those living and visiting Riversdale Beach, feeling safe is an important element. Riversdale Beach is the only patrolled surf beach in the Wairarapa Region. Safety issues that were raised included;

- Better education regarding responsible quad bike use and underage quad bike drivers
- Speed of vehicles along the beach
- Having a better pedestrian and cycling-friendly environment – particularly during peak summer season and public holidays- please refer to Key Priority Area 2. Safeguarding our rural beach character.
- Maintaining a low crime rate and crime prevention
- Emergency preparedness

A common priority emerging from the engagement is improving visitor behaviour and respect, through better communication and information, educating and raising awareness as well as establishing collaborative relationships between residents, bach owners, holiday home rental companies, and visitors.

People visit Riversdale Beach in a number of different ways. Some stay for a few hours, while others a few days or weeks. No matter how long their visit, people can have an impact on Riversdale's natural environment, village character, and other people's enjoyment.

Community suggestions include: one-pagers and collaborative education campaigns on specific topics, expanding the Welcome to Riversdale booklet to include community rules and regulations, and ensuring these are available in holiday rental accommodation, at the store, golf club and other public places.



Key Priority Area 4. Enhancing our community organisations, facilities and assets

The top activities people like to do at Riversdale Beach include catching up with friends and family, walking or jogging, swimming in the sea, or just sitting enjoying the beach. Most regularly used facilities and services include the shop, golf club, coffee and food carts, the Southern Reserve, and the Surf Club.

The community loves the beach and sand dunes, the wide range of outdoor recreation activities people can be involved in, along with the numerous community organisations, their programmes, events and positive cultures. This is reinforced by the many people who volunteer to help run and manage these community assets and programmes. The recently developed motorhome campground is also becoming more popular and valued by the community.

Building from local community strengths is a core principle in community-led planning. Ensuring sustainable long-term good governance, successional leadership, and strategic planning of our hero organisations, including the golf, surf, fishing clubs and RBCA, is central to a thriving Riversdale Beach community. A clear priority is ensuring our community organisations remain strong with good successional planning, including training our potential leaders of tomorrow and documenting processes.

Many people expressed the need to improve and upgrade the shop, its hours, provision and facilities, as well as having more food and dining options. Recent changes to the shop's management and the opening of the Homewood Storeroom Café will help to address these issues.

Other concerns included: redeveloping the area in front of the surf club and Bodle Drive, along with the Southern Reserve entrance, more recreational trails, improved provision of visitor facilities, including seating, cheaper visitor holiday accommodation options, cleaner public toilets, improved parks and reserve maintenance, and public transport options out to Riversdale Beach.

Key Priority Area 5. Ensuring our infrastructure meets community needs

Overall, the community is generally satisfied with key infrastructural services and assets such as village roads, rubbish and recycling services and facilities, and the sewerage system.

However, there are some areas that require improvement, including the access road to Riversdale Beach, a safer pedestrian network, a few more street lights in dark areas, stormwater system, more reliable telecommunications and power supply, along with better parks and reserve maintenance. (It should be noted that extensive work has been done on the access road since the survey was completed and improvements have been made to power supply reliability).

Based on the survey results, the challenges facing Riversdale Beach's infrastructure and services include degrading access road due to logging trucks and weather, population growth putting pressure on existing infrastructure, flooding issues, unreliable power supply, budget constraints, and the impact of climate change particularly erosion and sea level rise.

Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment and addressing visitor carparking issues are discussed under Key Priority Area 2. In terms of safeguarding our rural beach character and sense of place, these issues need to consider and balance the community's desire to retain its rural beach character and investigate streets for people type programmes.

Isolated stormwater issues and flooding have been known to occur throughout the Village, particularly during storm events. Investigations and discussions with relevant landowners continue and are ongoing.

Masterton District Council under their Climate Change Action Plan, Action 36, is committed to encouraging EV charging providers to provide additional charging stations to the Masterton District, including at rural hubs such as schools and coastal settlements. Infrastructure evaluation is required to ensure power capacity feeding Riversdale Beach can cope with fast charge demand.

Riversdale Beach Community Plan Implementation Guide

The Implementation Guide below expands on the the foundation and enabling actions identified above and aims to take the vision and key priority areas through to an achievable reality.

Actions identified within the Implementation Guide will be led by the Riversdale Beach Community Plan Steering Group and require collaboration with key strategic partners, including Masterton District Council.

Each action has been assigned priority. Priorities are listed as either foundation, high, medium, future or Business as Usual (BAU).

- Foundation underpins much of the way the plan will be implemented
- Immediate priorities are those projects or actions that are for immediate focus. They are those quick wins that can be started now and achieved in the short term (within 6-12 months).
- High will be undertaken as resourcing allows.
- Medium is generally to be completed once high-priority items has been completed
- Future priorities can be deferred and started once high and medium-priority items are underway.
- Business as Usual (BAU) are those actions or activities that are already happening in some way or being delivered by Council or other organisations. Continuing to deliver these activities will contribute to achieving the outcomes of the plan.

Foundation actions		
Action #	Action description	Priority/Timeframe
a)	Set up a strategic Steering Group with representatives from RBCA, the Golf Club, Surf Club, Fishing Club, MDC operations, and bach owners to oversee the delivery of the community plan.	Immediate
b)	Develop an overall communications plan that provides an overview & coordination of all the required community information and education identified in the RBCP. Consider key messages, target audiences, effective communication methods and timing of specific messages with the community. Some community suggestions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one pager on 'Being a low impact resident and visitor & caring for our beach' • Developing the Welcome to Riversdale Beach booklet to include regulatory requirements, considering others and respecting the village 	Immediate
c)	Investigate funding a part-time community coordinator to help implement the plan including identifying and applying for external funding and grants	High
d)	Develop an external funding and grants plan	High – once c) above has been actioned
e)	Continue to maintain effective relationships with MDC, including appointing a place-based manager and single point of contact.	Business as usual (BAU)

Key priority area 1. Protecting and understanding our natural environment

To provide a healthy and resilient coastal environment (beach, sand dunes, parks and reserves) that supports and enhances our village's biodiversity and natural heritage, and to actively plan for climate change.

Action #	Action description	Priority
1.1	<p>Identify and coordinate key environmental information and messages and add to communications plan. Including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a low impact resident and visitor • Protecting the NZ Dotterel and other breeding birds • Animal pests • What to plant and what not to • Responsible dog control • Effectiveness of dune planting and coastal erosion control 	Immediate
1.2	Work with GWRC, Department of Conservation, and NZ Forest and Bird to understand the main animal pests, their impacts and how to control and monitor these pests.	High
1.3	Investigate rabbit control options including what other communities are doing around the country. e.g Pukaha blue traps	Immediate
1.4	Obtain more information about the current stoat control and trapping stations, particularly in the Southern Reserves	High
1.5	Encourage property owners to continue controlling rats and mice	High
1.6	<p>Protect the NZ Dotterel & other coastal breeding birds by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and obtain more information about the NZ Dotterel and other coastal breeding birds found at Riversdale Beach and communicate this information with the community, i.e., what the birds look like, where and when they nest etc • Install and maintain fencing around breeding sites • Review and upgrade signage • Encourage locals to monitor and keep an eye on protected areas 	<p>High</p> <p>Note some work has been started.</p>
1.7	Work with MDC & GWRC to understand the main pest plants and develop a Riversdale Beach Coastal Planting Guide for property owners outlining what to and what not to plant.	High
1.8	Monitor if garden waste dumping is an issue	Future
1.9	Work with MDC Animal Control and provide the Riversdale Beach community with more information regarding dog off-leash areas and being a responsible dog owner. Please note that MDC Bylaw review is due 2024/25 any changes to off leash areas can be made through the review process.	High

1.10	<p>Establish a local Riversdale Beach Water Quality Steering Group that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with Mountains to Sea Wellington Trust to improve regular water quality testing, monitoring, and sharing the results. • Works with GWRC and Mountains to Sea Wellington to be involved with any wider Catchment Planning to improve the water quality of all Riversdale Beach's streams. 	High
1.11	Research and obtain more information on the effectiveness of dune plantings & coastal erosion minimisation and communicate with local community including local workshops.	High
1.12	Continue working with MDC & GWRC to protect the sand dunes, including more revegetation plantings and manage human impacts via installing sand ladders, bollards and signage. Note that there is an annual partnership through an MOU in place between MDC and GWRC, where MDC financially contributes annually to support the key native ecosystem (KNE) programme, particularly in the Southern Reserve.	BAU
1.13	Decide on projects for which MDC Community Climate Fund funding could be applied for.	High May/June 2024
1.14	Support Council to implement Action 59 in MDC Climate Action Plan – Council to understand what measures to take to mitigate the effects of flooding and sea level rise. Please find the link to the Climate Action Plan here https://www.mstn.govt.nz/council/plans-and-strategies/plans/climate-action-plan/whats-in-the-plan	High



Key priority area 2. Safeguarding our rural beach character and unique sense of place

To encourage a slower relaxed pace of life that protects our rural beach character and celebrates our village's unique heritage.

Action #	Action description	Priority
2.1	Identify and coordinate key information and messages that help promote the rural beach character of Riversdale Beach and add to comms plan. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting village streets as shared corridors, particularly during busy holiday periods Promote the use of active transport choices e.g. walking & cycling Keep Riversdale Beautiful - Litter prevention 	Immediate
2.2	Work with the Wairarapa Regional Walking & Cycling Coordinator to promote active forms of transport choices for short trips, when visiting Riversdale Beach, such as walking & cycling.	High
2.3	Work with MDC to ensure infrastructure and public facilities are designed and developed in sympathy to the rural beach character and consider the 80/20 rule, where 80% of the time the village is a quiet.	BAU
2.4	Investigate options for improving litter control and management, especially during the busy summer period. Including working with MDC Waste Minimalization Coordinator to promote litter prevention which can be coordinated with information and education on being a low-impact resident and visitor, refer to action 1.1.	High

Key priority area 3. Fostering our community spirit and vibe

To strengthen and maintain active partnerships with bach owners, visitors, mana whenua, local authorities, community stakeholders and volunteers (RBCA, local clubs etc), to provide a vibrant, safe inclusive village.

Action #	Action description	Priority
3.1	Improve quad bike safety by working with NZ Police to develop a community education campaign regarding responsible quad bike use within the village and beach	High
3.2	Continue to support the temporary alcohol ban bylaw and to ensure NZ Police presence at Labour weekend and New Year's Eve.	BAU
3.3	Continue to publish an annual Riversdale Beach community events and celebrations calendar	BAU
3.4	Continue to work with Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office (WREMO) and the Riversdale Beach Golf Club to host a series of resilience events.	Immediate Summer 23/24
3.5	Continue to review Riversdale Beach Emergency Response Plan every two years and support community response practice	BAU

Key priority area 4. Enhancing our community organisations, facilities and assets

To provide quality community organisations, facilities and assets that offer choice, are accessible, meet community needs and connect people to the coast.

Action #	Action description	Priority
4.1	Continue to support and promote local businesses and services by continuing to publish an annual Riversdale Beach Service Directory and other buy-local initiatives.	BAU
4.2	Encourage effective succession planning training and development for our local community organisations, including identifying and supporting the next generation of leaders.	High
4.3	Ensure the critical information and processes of our local community organisations are well documented and clear.	Medium
4.4	Investigate developing a public recreational trail from the Village to the Homewood Storeroom along the coast	Future
4.5	Continue to maintain the recreational trails throughout the Southern Reserve.	BAU
4.6	Investigate developing a fitness trail within the village – one piece of equipment a year.	Medium
4.7	Upgrade Bodle Drive Area, ensuring sensitivity with the rural beach character, picnic space for beach visitors, access and community use, including additional parking if possible.	High
4.8	Upgrade the entrance into the Southern Reserve, including relocating and upgrading the public toilets and signage. (Include changing rooms). Ensure design sensitivity with the rural beach character, accommodating for beach visitors, access and community use, and increasing car parking spaces. Note, that upgrading the Southern Reserve Entrance will allow an additional beach access hub and reduce the congestion which occurs at the northern end. The surf club provides summer patrols near the Southern end. Opportunities exist for mobile food coffee providers to also be located at the Southern reserve.	High
4.9	Upgrade Karaka Reserve, ensuring sensitivity with the rural beach character, accommodating for beach visitors, access and community use.	Medium
4.10	Install more seating around the village which is sensitive to the rural beach character.	Immediate
4.11	Investigate options for providing an electric vehicle charging station.	Medium
4.12	Investigate the provision of a dump station.	Future
4.13	Work collaboratively with MDC and Rec Services in the drive for continuous improvement in the presentation and hygiene of public toilet facilities at Riversdale Beach.	BAU

Key priority area 5. Ensuring our infrastructure meets community needs

To provide reliable infrastructural assets and services that meet community needs and are adaptable to our changing climate.

Action #	Action description	Priority
5.1	Continue to promote the MDC Request a Service process if assets need attention or repair. Continue to work with MDC to improve response times and outcomes from requests.	Immediate BAU
5.2	Work with MDC to identify appropriate locations for new streetlights, ensuring all streets lights are dark sky friendly and work with MDC to get lights installed.	Medium
5.3	Continue to work with MDC to investigate and discuss stormwater systems and options with relevant landowners	BAU
5.4	Continue to work with MDC to provide and maintain public rubbish bins throughout the village, with increased servicing during peak visitor periods.	High
5.5	Continue to work with MDC to support the current increased rubbish collection during peak summer visitor periods.	BAU



About Riversdale Beach

Riversdale Beach is 54 km southeast of Masterton and is a popular seaside village and holiday destination along the Wairarapa coast. The Wairarapa coastline is extensive and widely diverse, with significant portions relatively inaccessible and subject to a range of natural hazards. Residential development is concentrated to only a few isolated settlements including Riversdale Beach, each with their own distinctive character and strengths.

Riversdale Beach is known for its relaxed laid back rural coastal charm, balmy sheltered micro-climate, all year-round surf, long and sandy beach and variety of safe family friendly outdoor recreation activities, including the region's only patrolled surf club, golf, fishing, snorkelling, and diving plus many more.

The village has a growing permanent and semi-permanent residential base (approximately 165 residents up from 30 in 2005), and numerous holiday homes and baches, (400 properties in total). It experiences significant summer seasonal population fluctuations, estimated to be around 2000-3000 visitors, mainly over Christmas, New Year and in January. It is a village with two faces, 80 % of the year it is a quiet peaceful rural beach settlement with the remaining 20 % being a popular holiday destination hotspot.

Housing density is low with many of the properties located along the small plain to the south of Motuwaireka Stream, either tucked under the coastal escarpment to the west or more recently clustered on the plateaus above, with the deeply incised gullies being well planted with native vegetation. To the north of Motuwaireka Stream is Orui Road which consists of approximately 20 rural residential properties and open farmland, bound by the coast and steep hills to the west.

Due to the original developer's vision and foresight, the settlement has well thought out and extensive parks, reserves, and open space network, including an ecologically significant foreshore reserve and sand dunes, home to the NZ Dotterel and other coastal wildlife, as well as acting as an important buffer between the beach and residential properties. Other key areas include the area in front of the surf club, the centrally located nine-hole golf course, the popular southern recreation reserve, and Bodle Reserve play area.

The roads and streetscapes throughout Riversdale Beach have kept urban type infrastructure like foot paths, kerb and channel and streetlights to a minimum to reflect community desires to protect the rural beach character and unique sense of place, reinforcing the relaxed laid-back coastal vibe.

Riversdale Beach is a village with a strong sense of community, a supportive and friendly spirit, which is valued by many residents and visitors. This is strengthened by the number of people who volunteer to run the several very important local organisations that deliver the variety of events and programmes.

Appendix A outlines the existing facilities and services currently provided at Riversdale Beach.”

Where are we talking about?

The geographical area covered by the plan focuses on the Riversdale Beach village, with the Southern Reserve to the south, Orui Road to the North and East Leighs Farms Riverside Terrace Subdivision forming the western boundary.

However, the wider Riversdale Beach community includes the surrounding rural catchments of Homewood and Whareama, along with the variety of bach and holiday homeowners and their families. As well as those who have a special connection with Riversdale Beach, either past or present.

Developing the Plan

Effective engagement with the people who have a connection with Riversdale Beach was an essential part in developing this plan to ensure it was well informed, relevant, and useful for the Riversdale Beach community going forward.

Engagement included co-designing the project brief, local workshops, summer surveys, one on one interviews and targeted engagement including with Council elected members, Whareama School, Riversdale Beach Surf Club, Iwi and hapū. Many people participated in the engagement process with over 175 survey responses, 83 attending workshops and 15 one on one interviews.

The collaborative effort established throughout the planning process will form the basis for a long-term partnership between the community and the Council. The plan also includes an Implementation Guide outlining community led actions. These actions will provide the opportunity to continue to enhance collaboration and partnerships between the different groups and help boost resilience and capacity in the community.

The table below illustrates the community feedback from the engagement process. It identifies those things the community loves about Riversdale Beach, things they'd like to see protected for future generations and things that could improve the area.

Since the community engagement, several achievements and improvements have been progressed, including changes at the shop, a new café at Homewood, roading and beach access improvements, NZ Dotterel protection, Southern Reserve and dune plantings, Wellington Regional Emergency Management workshop, litter survey and many more community events like potluck dinners for flood victims, Pilates, DORA bus etc.

How the Community sees Riversdale Beach – now and in the future

Best things about Riversdale Beach

- “Sense of community and the great people”
- “Relaxed laid back rural beach character”
- “The beach and sand dunes”
- “The Riversdale Beach Surf Life Saving Club and its programmes”
- “The Riversdale Beach Golf Club”
- “Coffee and food carts”
- “Facebook Community Notice board”
- “Southern Reserve”
- “Variety of outdoor activities”

Things to be protected

- “Rural beach character”
- “Relaxed community vibe and spirit”
- “Small village feel”
- “Peace, quiet and tranquillity”
- “The beach and sand dunes”
- “Wildlife including the NZ Dotterels”
- “Safe family friendly environment”

Things needing improvement

- “The shop”
- “More café/dining/food truck options”
(The Homewood Storeroom Café has opened during the development of this plan)
- “More community events, markets and concerts, particularly for teens”
- “The Riversdale Access Road”
(significant work has been completed since survey)
- “Safe pedestrian friendly environment particular during the busy summer period, more walking and cycling trail loops, and a fitness circuit”
- “Bodle Drive and the area in front of Surf Club”
- “More facilities for day trippers, car parking, picnic tables, seating and shade”
- “Parks and reserve maintenance including rubbish bins emptied more frequently during summer, weeding and more planting, and improved toilet cleaning”
- “Short term accommodation options”
- “Regulatory controls – speed on beach, noise control, fireworks ban, underage use of quad bikes”
- “Southern Reserve entrance and toilets”
- “EV station and dump station”
- “Fuel access”
- “Public transport options”

Things we need to think about

“Natural hazards and climate change – sea level rise, storm events, flooding, drought, coastal erosion”

“Changing population and demographics”

- 200,000 more people in the Wellington region over the next 30 years
- Aging population
- Summer population influx – 80% of the year it is a quiet rural coastal village while the remaining 20%, the population increases significantly with visitors
- Approximately 100 more houses planned at Riversdale Beach
- Increase in number of permanent and semi-permanent residents

“Provide infrastructure and services to support our growing and changing population in a manner that protects what we love about Riversdale beach. For example; our rural beach character.”

“Protecting what we love about Riversdale Beach and enhancing our strengths.”

- Beach and sand dunes
- Natural areas and wildlife
- Rural beach character
- Relaxed community vibe and spirit
- Safe family friendly environment
- Key clubs and organisations
- Variety of activities

“Better community information and communication including educating residents, visitors, and the community how to care for our natural areas, considering others and keeping safe.”

“Succession planning of our key organisations, supporting our leaders of tomorrow and acknowledging our volunteers.”

“Implementing, resourcing, and funding actions identified in the community plan. Consider opportunities for commercial ventures and/or visitors supporting environmental/restoration projects as part of offsetting carbon emissions.”

“Effective relationship and communications with Masterton District Council, including a placed based relationship manager and one point of contact.”

Monitoring and Reviewing Our Community Plan

As new information comes to hand and actions are completed, the Community Plan will need to be monitored and updated. It is expected the plan be reviewed at least once every ten years, with the Implementation Guide reviewed every three years in alignment with the Council's Long-Term Plan processes.

There must be plenty!



Drawing by Isaac
Whareama School

Appendix A – Riversdale Beach Histories

Local Māori History

The region between Uriti and Whareama holds rich Māori history due to the abundance of food sources in streams, rivers, wetlands, and along the rocky shore. Notable sites in the vicinity of Riversdale include two papakāinga (communal housing sites), a swamp area considered wāhi tapu (sacred), and a burial ground near Camp Anderson. Evidence suggests regular human habitation in these areas.

The Whareama district features three Rangitāne forts: Te Ūpoko-o-Rakaitauheke, Ngā Wāhinepotae, and Oruhi. Additionally, there are 34 recorded archaeological sites between Whareama and Flat Point, with common shell middens and pits. An archaeological site 1.5 km south of the Whareama River mouth contains diverse remains such as hut sites, hearth stones, midden shells, human, moa, and fish bones, as well as artifacts like adzes and obsidian flakes. Numerous charcoal layers indicate historical activity in the vicinity of the river.

The Hapū associated with the area include Ngāti Hāmua and Ngāi Tūmapūhia-a-Rangi and Ngāti Hinepare. Ngāi Te Tau are a whānau of Rangitāne and Kahungunu that have a significant historical presence and remain ahikā.

The Māori name for the area around present-day Riversdale includes variations such as Motukairangi Motuwaireka and Mōtūwairaka. Motukairangi refers to the ocean as viewed from the land looking out to sea. Motuwaireka refers to the stream flowing through Riversdale Beach, it starts inland as far as Stronvar.

[Kōrero provided by Joe Potangaroa]

European History

Riversdale Beach is 54 km south east of Masterton, and is a popular seaside village and holiday destination along the Wairarapa coast. It's home to the region's longest and widest sandy beach, all year-round surf and has a balmy sheltered micro-climate. The village has a solid residential base and numerous holiday homes, with a popular nine-hole golf course, a surf lifesaving club, a general store and a variety of parks and reserves. It is where people from the Wairarapa and lower North Island come to play. It's a great place for swimming, surfing, snorkelling, golf and fishing.

Before the 1950s, the area remained undeveloped and a series of sand dunes. The resort or village was first developed in 1954 by Basil Bodle, a champion swimmer who visited the beach often to train. Basil brought 100 acres of beach front dunes off Riversdale Station. By early 1960s, he'd developed sections, roads, and had undertaken a comprehensive planting programme. Demand for sections increased and he continued to develop the public facilities that are there today, including parks and reserves, the golf course, surf club and general store. Since 1954, the area has gone through many development stages, the most recent of which created over 120 new residential lots on the terraces above the established village.

Today Riversdale Beach has approximately 400 residential houses, with approximately 160 permanent residents, and 20 houses along Orui road. There are two campgrounds (but the sites now mainly have permanent structures); Camp Waimanaaki, a new self-contained motorhome campground; a golf course with two tennis courts; fishing club, fire brigade, a refurbished Surf Lifesaving Club; catholic church (St Joseph's), Mōtūwairaka marae; Riversdale Beach Store (general store and café) and Sholtz Café (summer only); Health Clinic @ Waimanaaki; and an active Riversdale Beach Community Association.




Blue House Productions

Riversdale Beach Community Plan

MAHI TAHI
WORKING TOGETHER



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Supported by Masterton District Council